

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Council Work Session
February 4, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

President McCarthy-Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:32 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Taiani, Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Grannemann, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin and President McCarthy-Johnson. Amanda J. Ford, Interim Borough Manager was also present. Mayor John A. Thompson was absent. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, a moment of silence was observed to remember victims of violent crime.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Richards 925 Rebecca Avenue – Two items for discussion: 1) Graffiti Removal Trust Fund. Mr. Richards highly urges that Council aggressively attempt to control graffiti incidents before implementing a fund for graffiti removal. Item #2 not discussed due to time limits expiration.

Linda Kauffman – 555 Mifflin Avenue - Comments about Green Street Park and the legal filing against the Wilkinsburg School District to recover the park. She mentioned that she has read Mr. Donovan, School Board Member response which does not address the issue. The issue being that the park does not belong to the School Board; it does belong to the Borough. And the comments need to be rectified as soon as possible. The letter does not address the issue.

Robert Firth – 216 Green Street – Read a prepared letter regarding Green Street Park. The letter supported the value of the park, and Council decision should be to preserve the ownership of the park.

Jodi Guy – 211 Bevington Road – Informed Council that her discussion was not on the agenda and would wait to speak under the second scheduled Public Comment.

James Richards – 925 Rebecca Avenue – Provided to Council the history of Green Street Park initial purchased by the School Board and the intended purpose for the land. History reflects a joint partnership for general purposes of the grounds between the School Board and the Borough.

CAPITAL PLANNING

1. Discussion regarding purchase of new Street-Sweeper.

Mr. Shattuck reiterated past discussions regarding the Street-Sweeper and whether or not if adequate funding was available to reconsider the purchase.

Amanda J. Ford, Interim Borough Manager informed Council of a discussion with the Public Works Director regarding reconsideration of a purchasing a Street-Sweeper. Or that funding would be needed for maintenance and repairs to the existing Street-Sweeper before spring and the Street-Sweeping season.

Council was also informed that the 2015 budget has lined item funding in the amount of \$62,747.00 towards the purchase and/or leasing down payment.

Ms. Macklin comments on a discussion with Finance, Chair and Wayne Garhart, Bonds Counselor regarding options to fund Street-Sweeper, and also a paving machine. I ask that we revisit these options and meet with the Finance and Planning Commission for further discussion and planning.

Mr. Shattuck refers to the Capital Planning Report describing the committees' activities and planning of community infrastructure and the application process for the CITF (Community Infrastructure Tourism Funding). These are submitted to the Redevelopment of Housing Authority of Allegheny County at least twice and were not awarded funding. This year the Committee would like to prepare an application for the strategic planning of eliminating 29 blighted properties along Ardmore Boulevard. This plan will improve our gateway to improvement along the Parkway to Swissvale Avenue.

The Borough Engineer is also considering a CITF Grant application in partnership with the Borough of Churchill in a joint effort to replace the sewer pumping station. Application deadline is February 27, 2015, concurring resolutions are needed to execute regardless of which project we decide.

Planning Committee has other listed potential projects: Keystone Planning Grant funded by the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission deadline March 2, 2015.

- Penn-Lincoln
- Eastridge Library
- Ardmore Wall
- Norfolk Southern Railways – Plans provided to Council on January 14, 2015. Signed agreement expected, Engineer and Solicitor will review for opinions.
- Decorative Street Lights remaining \$75,000 to complete the project. Bid under \$75,000; LED Lights revision is being considered.
- Traffic Study final presentation on March 4, 2015. Presentation on February 18, 2015 Estate Administration.

- Code Enforcement Director suggested an ordinance for foreclosed properties registry. There were concerns about the legality. Joint-COG Blight Busters hosted a Company that offers a registration services fees to be split between the company and the Borough that they aggressively go after the banks for clean-up of the foreclosed properties there is a \$200 registration fee.

President McCarthy-Johnson – Asks for further questions and/or comments under the Capital Planning Report – None.

PUBLIC SAFETY

President McCarthy-Johnson – Deferred to Mayor, John Thompson for comments under public safety.

Mayor, John Thompson – Report of abduction yesterday, no suspect at this time. Female juvenile was abducted from Wood Street and taken to Braddock, Pennsylvania. Vehicle description is an orange or peach midsize colored vehicle. Juvenile was able to escape and was spotted and recognized by a Propel School teacher and was taken to Braddock Police Department.

Two arrests were made on the homicide from Kelly Street. A robbery incident is what resulted to the homicide.

Two studies conducted at Kelly School for traffic concern issues and the High School focusing on hours and standard safety operations.

The final five (5) police candidates have been selected for hiring. There were fifteen (15) candidates; five (5) are being qualified based on three (3) categories that are used to determine qualifications. The other ten (10) were disqualified for reasons unbeknown to me.

Question by Ms. Macklin, was it the investigation that disqualified them?

Mayor Thompson - Yes.

President McCarthy-Johnson – Chief Coleman and the Police Department finally received the entire list of all sixteen (16) candidates after meeting with the polygraph examiner. The investigations were started prior to the polygraph. As a result it was determine that wasted manpower was exerted. This learning process order has reflected a lesson learned and future process will be step-by-step process that is time and cost sufficient. We expect to have the finalize list and turned over to the Manager by Friday.

Ms. Macklin – Civil Service Commission will certify a list, correct?

Mayor Thompson – Yes.

Police Department is looking for a grant to purchase new ballistic vest every three years; generally the Borough pays half and the other funding is through a grant.

Police Department is down three vehicles; one being a parking enforcement vehicle, one vehicle was totaled and the other vehicle needing over \$7,000.00 in repairs.

Software updates in all police vehicles were installed by Owen McAfee. Also, seeking grant for laptop software that will provide facial recognition capability from the mobile unit.

Announcement of Art Talent Show for upcoming activities at Kelly School and Black History month movies scheduled for Thursday and Saturday.

President McCarthy-Johnson – Question regarding flyers for the Art Talent Show. Were any flyers provided to Pucks and Sister Theobowman?

Mayor Thompson – I cannot answer that.

GENERAL MATTERS

1. Discussion regarding Tenant Registration Application Fee.

Interim Borough Manager – Madame President, Code director, Dan Friedson ask me to discuss with Council to consideration eliminating the Tenant Registration Fee. Due to the increase in fees for the occupancy inspection, Code Director would inform all property owners to submit a tenant registration application at the submission of occupancy inspections application and forego the mass mailing of tenant registration each year for annual collection of \$10.

Council denied the request based on the purpose of the fees was to support the manpower and other costs associated with each inspection required under sanctioned guidelines of the Fire Code Inspection Safety Board.

2. Discussion regarding a Graffiti Trust Fund.

Dan Friedson, Code Enforcement Director, has ask that I present to Council the necessity for Council to establish a Graffiti Trust Fund based on the ordinance that requires such a fund to be established in order to purchase materials that would remove the graffiti from targeted properties; and to aide in assistance when victims are targeted on multiple occurrences.

President McCarthy-Johnson – I plan to announce various Council Committees tonight. I believe that the appropriate committee can discuss and present back to council a plan to establish a graffiti trust fund to remove unwanted graffiti displayed on owned and abandoned properties within our community. Is that okay with everyone?

3. Discussion on resolution supporting WCDC application for Façade Grants.

Tracey Evans, Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) asked for consideration of a resolution supporting a re-application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for another round of façade grant. The DCED has already funded a grant in the amount of \$30,000.00 and was successfully closed out in June. And we are looking to re-apply for \$50,000.00 which would provide 10 Façade Grant matches. It would be the same program where applications will be reviewed by the Design Committee at the WCDC that is required by the PA Main Street Program. After the owners complete the work they are prescribed and meet the borough codes. And is reviewed by the Wilkinsburg Arts Design Commission the owner would be reimbursed by 50% of the cost up to \$50,000.00.

President McCarthy-Johnson- Place on the agenda for next week.

4. Discussion on re-applying for the CITF Grant for joint-application with the Borough of Churchill for the replacement of the joint sewer pump station in Blackridge. (Ardmore Demolition Grant)

Mr. Shattuck – My thoughts are we will not get funded for both. Is body needs to decide which of the two would be best for us to pursue. We have been turned down twice for the sewer. Demolitions are our number one issue. I recommend that we go after funding for strategic demolition. We applied for the maximum grant amount of \$250,000.00. Is there a consensus to proceed with one application?

Council agrees to application for Ardmore Boulevard Demolition Project.

Old Business

1. Consensus to proceed with Business District Tax Abatement process.

President McCarthy-Johnson – Comments on the presentation that was delivered by Tom Hardy and Tracey Evans regarding the Tax Abatement Program. It is a very good opportunity for the Borough; and to give businesses an opportunity as well. Do we have a consensus?

Ms. Macklin – Pointed out that the Borough currently lacks a process to facilitate the program. She further stated that there is a need to meet with the WCDC and have a discussion to implement a process to facilitate the program.

President McCarthy-Johnson acknowledges the lack of a process and reiterated a discussion to also get the School Board District involved to assist with writing grants and the structuring a process.

Tracey Evans – In moving forward discussions will be held with the Solicitor and that plans have been made to present to the School Board the same presentation that was delivered tonight. The geography will be decided by the Borough and the School Board.

President McCarthy-Johnson – There is a consensus amongst Council to allow the WCDC to move forward to structure a formal process to regulate the Tax Abatement Program. Do you need a letter from Council?

Tracey Evans – No, we will prepare an ordinance defining the process of the program.

2. Green Street Park

President McCarthy-Johnson – Considering the fact that a legal proceeding is already in place, discussion was deferred to anyone on council who had something further to comment.

Questions were raised as to why it was placed on the agenda and a final decision was made to table the discussion until the solicitor is present at the Legislative Meeting on February 11, 2015.

3. Municipal Services Fee (MSF)

President McCarthy-Johnson – This item is not on the agenda, but falls under old business for further discussion in order to be able to vote on this at the legislative meeting. Mr. Egler needs to be present to explain the numbers that he has provided.

Mr. Lefebvre spoke with Mr. Egler and a decision does not need to be made tonight. Ms. Ford and Mr. Egler needs to provide council with the actual numbers to support the increase and get it to council no later than Monday.

4. Council Committees

President McCarthy-Johnson - This discussion falls under old/new business. In order to eliminate confusion and to provide a better understanding as to what is going on throughout the Borough. Council Committees will be re-established for us to move forward particularly during this transition. These are the following Committees:

Personnel Committee – Chair, Paige Trice, Marc Taiani and Eugenia Moore

Hiring Committee – (Borough Manager Hiring Process) – Chair, Eugenia Moore, Paige Trice, Kate Grannemann and Michael Lefebvre

Public Safety Committee – Chair, Kate Grannemann, Patrick Shattuck and Pamela Macklin

Capital Planning/Economic Development – Chair, Patrick Shattuck, Kate Grannemann and Marita Garrett

Budget/Finance Committee – Chair, Michael Lefebvre, Eugenia Moore and Pamela Macklin

Community Relations/Special Events – Chair, Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson, Marita Garrett, Pamela Macklin and John Thompson, Mayor

Administration Committee – Chair, Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson, Eugenia Moore and Michael Lefebvre

Civil Sector and Constituent/Business Outreach - Chair, Pamela Macklin, Marita Garrett and Eugenia Moore

President McCarthy-Johnson requested each chairperson to meet with their committee members and decide on a date and time to meet and pass along to the Borough Manager so that it may be advertised.

- Also I have provided to Council a new improved Talent Bank Application for interested individuals for serving on any of the Boards and Commission. Anyone who is interested shall return the applications as soon as possible. Appointments will be made at the February 18th Finance Workshop Meeting. All committees shall start meeting in March. The Hiring and Personnel Committees are not open to the public. All other committees need to be advertised.

Mr. Taiani mentioned Penn DOT project to closing the parkway to remove the Greenfield Bridge

Borough Manager informed Council of items for discussion in their packets.

- Parks and Recreation applications
- Penn DOT Paving Project in June 2015
- Mz Smiley Daycare Center request Wilkinsburg Library for safe place for emergency evacuation.
- Temporary Services for Clerical Position

Wilkinsburg School District 12th Annual Symphony Concert Ticket Sale

Ms. Grannemann received a call from the University of Pittsburgh Volunteers March 9th – 12th

- Contact Port Authority about Graffiti on the busway.
- Clean-up scheduled for April 20th.

Public Comment

1. James Richards – Complained of icy sidewalks near all public parking lots along the Business District.

President McCarthy-Johnson – Notify Code Enforcement about the business district sidewalks and parking lot for icy conditions.

Jodi Guy – 211 Bevington Road – Chair, Wilkinsburg Arts Commission – Project for approval on February 19th on the Wood and South Park lot. I'm here to advise Council of this project before it is approved or not approved. I will email the proposal for Council's review to include everyone in this process.

President McCarthy-Johnson we have no representation of Council on your Board. By-Laws were prepared and we never thought about including Council representation.

2. Kate Luxemburg – 432 Rebecca Avenue – Discussion regarding Municipal Service Fee. What is defined as a building? A residential unit is that of which requires an occupancy permit. “Ready to Serve Fee” Dan Friedson and staff are capable of determining occupancy in the building. If the unit is occupied it is billable. Your Finance Director should not be billing properties and then attach a lien for non-payment.

Ms. Trice – Please check minutes for approval of DCBG Block Grants CD-39 for \$18,900 and CD-40 for \$101,000

President McCarthy-Johnson – Before we adjourn I would like to forego our executive session for tonight. But we need to have executive session on February 11th. I would also like to get the Borough Manager’s position advertisement. I plan to mention at the meeting to advertise for new Professional Legal Services.

Ms. Trice – I would like to obtain a proposal for legal services from the following firms:

- Tucker and Arensberg will not be able to submit a proposal because they provide legal services to the Wilkinsburg School Board
- Patricia McGrail & Associates will submit a proposal

ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourn at 8:39 p.m.

Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson
President of Council